

Policy Governing Public Use of Capitol Buildings and Grounds

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to accommodate public gatherings and other expressive activities, including assemblies, marches, rallies, meetings, press conferences, demonstrations, celebrations, and similar activities in the public areas of the capitol buildings and grounds, to the extent such use is consistent with use of the capitol buildings and grounds for the purpose of conducting the business of government and other purposes for which the areas are provided, and consistent with the state's interests in protecting public health, safety, welfare, and property, through reasonable time, place, and manner regulations.

Date Approved: August 21, 2009

Sunset Date: Upon adoption of permanent rules

Approved By: _____/s/_____
Linda Villegas Bremer
Director

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Introduction

This document sets forth the policy of the Department of General Administration governing use by the public of the public areas of the capitol buildings and grounds for gatherings and other expressive activities. The purpose of this policy is to accommodate public gatherings and other expressive activities, including assemblies, marches, rallies, meetings, press conferences, demonstrations, celebrations, and similar activities in the public areas of the capitol buildings and grounds, to the extent such use is consistent with use of the capitol buildings and grounds for the purpose of conducting the business of government and other purposes for which the

areas are provided, and consistent with the state's interests in protecting public health, safety, welfare, and property, through reasonable time, place, and manner regulations.

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Scope

This policy applies to use of the public areas of the capitol buildings and grounds by members of the public for public gatherings and other expressive activities. It does not address or restrict the use of capitol buildings or grounds by state government. Nor does it authorize public use of those portions of the capitol buildings and grounds not generally open to the public, including areas assigned to state officials and employees as part of the offices or work space of government agencies or institutions.

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Definitions

“Capitol buildings and grounds” means those buildings and grounds owned by the state and otherwise designated as state capitol grounds over which the Department of General Administration exercises custody and control under RCW 43.19.125(1). They include the west capitol campus, the east capitol campus, Sylvester Park, Heritage Park, Marathon Park, the Old Capitol Building and Capitol Lake, ways open to the public and specified adjoining lands and roadways, and the north capitol campus, and Centennial Park. See WAC 236-18-020 for definitions of west, east and north capitol campus. For purposes of this policy, the term “buildings” means enclosed buildings, structures appurtenant to them, and parking garages. “Grounds” means lands, including walkways, plazas, lawns, and parks.

“Public areas” means those areas of the capitol buildings and grounds that are generally open to the public. “Public areas” excludes office and other work areas ordinarily reserved for or primarily devoted to conducting the business and operations of state government, and any area which is identified by a sign pursuant to WAC 236-12-450 indicating that the area is not open to the public.

“Public gatherings or other expressive activities” mean activities for the purpose of communicating information or ideas to others that are intended to or likely to draw the attendance or participation of 25 or more people. “Public gatherings and other expressive activities” include assemblies, marches, rallies, performances, community events, press conferences, demonstrations, celebrations, ceremonies, speeches and similar expressive activities.

Application for Permit

- (1) A person or organization desiring to use a public area of the capitol buildings or grounds for a public gathering or other expressive activities shall first submit an application on a form prescribed by the Director of the Department of General Administration. The application shall include: (a) the name, address, and telephone number of the applicant; (b) the date, time and duration of the gathering; (c) the type of gathering and number of anticipated participants; (d) a description of the location requested for the gathering; (e) a description of any equipment or apparatus to be used during the gathering; (f) any special considerations or accommodations being requested; (g) payment of the required application processing fee; and (h) such other administrative information as the Department may require.
- (2) An application for a permit shall be made at least 2 business days prior to the date of the requested public gathering or other expressive activity.
- (3) The Department of General Administration, Visitor Services, shall issue or deny an application as promptly as reasonably possible, and in all cases within 2 business days after its receipt. Reason(s) for the denial shall be stated in writing.
- (4) In reviewing applications, Visitors Services may consider the availability of alternative times, dates or locations for the requested public gathering or other expressive activity, if the requested public gathering or other expressive activity would conflict with the time and location of a previously permitted public gathering or other expressive activity, or a pending application for a permit, and multiple public gatherings or other expressive activities cannot reasonably be accommodated in the same location at the same time. Applications for permits shall be considered on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- (5) An applicant may appeal the denial of a permit to the Director of the Department of General Administration within 5 business days of the denial. An appeal shall be in writing, state the basis on which the applicant asserts that the permit was improperly denied, and shall be received by the Department within the 5 day appeal period. The decision of the Director with respect to an appeal shall be the final decision of the Department of General Administration, and shall be issued in writing within 5 business days after receipt of the appeal.
- (6) All applications and permits for public gatherings or other expressive activities are subject to the following General Requirements governing public use of capitol buildings and grounds. An application for a permit may be denied, and a permit may be cancelled, only where it reasonably appears that the application for the public gathering or other

expressive activity does not comply with permit application requirements of this policy, or with one or more of the General Requirements below. The reason(s) for cancellation of a permit shall be provided in writing, and the appeal process of paragraph 5 above, applies.

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General Requirements

These requirements of general application are designed to facilitate use of the public areas of the capitol buildings and grounds by the public, while protecting the normal conduct of state operations, the safety of persons and property, the condition and appearance of capitol buildings and grounds, and accommodating other purposes for which the areas are provided.

- (1) No public gathering or other expressive activity may disrupt, conflict with, or interfere with the normal conduct of any state business, meeting, or proceeding.
- (2) No public gathering or other expressive activity may be permitted where it would conflict with the time and location of a previously approved public gathering or other expressive activity, and multiple public gatherings or other expressive activities cannot reasonably be accommodated in the same location, at the same time.
- (3) No permit shall be issued for a public gathering or other expressive activity for more than 14 consecutive calendar days.
- (4) Public gatherings or other expressive activities in the public areas of capitol grounds shall be permitted during the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Public gatherings or other expressive activities in the public areas of capitol buildings shall be permitted during the hours that the building is open.
- (5) No public gathering or other expressive activity may obstruct entrances, exits, staircases, doorways, or hallways, or the efficient flow of authorized pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- (6) Alteration of or damage to capitol buildings or capitol grounds, including vegetation, paving or concrete, is prohibited.
- (7) A permitted public gathering or other expressive activity may be held only in the area and during the period designated by the permit. Permits are not transferable.
- (8) No placards, banners, signs, exhibits or displays shall be placed in or posted or affixed to any capitol building.
- (9) In capitol buildings, placards, banners, and signs displayed during a public gathering or other expressive activity shall be handheld, and not on sticks or poles.

- (10) Placards, banners, signs, exhibits or displays may be placed on or posted or affixed to capitol grounds during permitted public gatherings or other expressive activities. Such objects shall be removed at the designated end time of the permit for the public gathering or other expressive activities. The State assumes no liability for loss or damage to placards, banners, signs, exhibits or displays placed on capitol grounds.
- (11) No placards, banners, signs, exhibits or displays may be allowed in any location where they would cause a distraction to motorists, or otherwise would present a hazard to persons or property.
- (12) No balloons shall be allowed in the public areas of capitol buildings.
- (13) Camping on capitol grounds is prohibited.
- (14) The Department of General Administration reserves the right to limit the use of capitol buildings and grounds at any time due to unforeseen operational circumstances, including but not limited to the need for emergency repairs or urgent security concerns. The Department will make reasonable efforts to alleviate the effect of such limitations on permitted public gatherings and other expressive activities.

Standards and Procedures

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- Procedure - Permitting Use of the Public Areas of the Capitol Buildings and Grounds dated 9/21/2009
- Standard - Fee Schedule

Related Information

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- [Master Plan Policy](#)
- Policy - Capitol Campus Facilities dated 10/05/2007

Forms and instructions

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- Use Application and Agreement
- Use Permit
- Approval letter
- Denial letter

History

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Created:

August 21, 2009

Supersedes:

This policy supersedes the Capitol Campus Facilities Policy dated 10-05-2007 to the extent that they are inconsistent.

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POLICY FEEDBACK

Did this Policy successfully answer your questions? Please send your comments to policy@ga.wa.gov .